



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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21 June 2005

**IND100300.E**

India: Follow up to IND43552.E of 6 June 2005 on the situation of the Hakka in India, including treatment by the government (2003-2005)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

In 20 June 2005 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a board member of the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto (CCCCGT) and advisor to Asian Heritage Month, who helped to organize the 2000 and 2004 Toronto Hakka Conference and who visited Tangra, Calcutta, in early 2005, provided the following information.

The majority of Hakka remaining in India today live in the district of Tangra, Calcutta, in East Bengal. The Hakka are principally involved in the leather tanning industry as successful small-business owners, though they have also diversified into occupations such as running hair salons and restaurants. The Hakka community is largely "self-contained," with temples, cemeteries and a Chinese language school. Entire Hakka families have left India for North America, Taiwan and Europe, and members of the younger generation continue to leave to seek better work and education opportunities abroad.

The CCCGT board member noted that, by virtue of their association with occupations usually reserved for the lower castes in India, the Hakka have been subject to caste-based discrimination. He also stated, without referring to specific incidents, that "[r]obbery of the Hakka by local gangsters is often ignored by the authorities [and] extortion by officials and by the police is not unknown." In addition, the survival of the Hakka tanning industry is in question, as authorities have discussed moving the businesses out of Tangra for environmental reasons. The CCCGT board member argued that the government's desire to relocate the tanneries might also be driven by economic reasons related to the rising value of real estate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

### Reference

Board member, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto. 20 June 2005. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate.

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